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THE

PATRIOT KING;

OR,

IRISH CHIEF.

[Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]

THE

PATRIOT KING;

OR

IRISH CHIEF.

A

TRAGEDY.

Performed at the THEATRE in SMOCK-ALLEY, DUBLIN.

By FRANCIS DOBBS.

LONDON:

Printed for J. BEW, No. 28, *Paternoſter-Row*, and A. GRANT, No. 5, *Bridges-ſtreet, Covent-Garden.*

M.DCC.LXXXIV.

THE

PATRIOTISM

OF

IRISH CHIEF.

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LONDON:

Printed for J. Daw, No. 22, Fleet-Street, and
A. Grant, No. 5, Bridge-Street, Covent-Garden.
M.DCC.LXXXV.

To the Right Honourable

The COUNTESS of ELY.

MADAM,

ENCOURAGED by the readineſs with which you patroniſed the IRISH CHIEF, when repreſented on the *Dublin* Stage, I have ventured to offer that performance to the world, under the ſanction of your Ladyſhip's name. I hope you will pardon the liberty I have taken in doing ſo, without firſt obtaining your permiſſion. I ſhould not have preſumed ſo far, had not your Ladyſhip been pleaſed to expreſs your approbation of my play, when I had the honour of laying it before you at *Rathfarnham*.

I am

I am convinced it would be highly diſagreeable to you, were I to purſue the common mode of Dedications: I ſhall therefore refrain from a ſubject, on which I could with pleaſure expatiate; and ſhall only beg leave to aſſure you, that I am, with the greateſt reſpect,

Your Ladyſhip's Moſt devoted

And moſt grateful humble Servant,

FRANCIS DOBBS.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT may not be unneceſſary to acquaint the Reader, that this piece was performed in Dublin, at Smock-Alley Theatre, in April 1773.

The Author thought, from his obſervations during the performance, that many uſeful alterations, omiſſions, and additions might be made; and he flatters himſelf that he has much improved his play ſince that period.

The character of Cleones is entirely new, and of courſe the ſcenes between him and Pharon (formerly Tor;) whoſe paſſion for Stira is alſo an addition.

The cataſtrophe of this Tragedy was formerly unhappy, as Stira was really poiſoned: the Author, however, hath yielded to the opinion of his friends, and has given a more fortunate concluſion.

The ingenious Mr. Melmoth, who filled the character of Ceallachan, made many judicious alterations in that part; but, as the Author cannot think of offering any thing in print to the public that is not

moſt

moſt ſtrictly his own, he has entirely omitted them; and chooſes rather to want the ornaments of Mr. Melmoth's pen, than ſhine with borrowed luſtre.

The Author once had the higheſt ambition of being the compoſer of a well-received Tragedy: led away by youth and inexperience, he vainly hoped to ſucceed in his wiſhes, and, at the age of twenty-one, he firſt wrote the IRISH CHIEF. Time, however, hath ſince ſhown him his error, and he hath for ever relinquiſhed the idle expectation of Poetic Fame.

The Author of this piece will not be ſo illiberal as to rail at the Managers: his play has, without doubt, a thouſand imperfections, and perhaps a much greater number than are ſufficient to juſtify its rejection from the Theatres of Covent-Garden and Drury-lane: the Public, however, have ſometimes differed from the opinion even of a Mr. Garrick or a Mr. Coleman; and it is not impoſſible but they may allow as much merit to the IRISH CHIEF, as to a *Chriſtmas Tale*, an *Iriſh Widow*, or, a *Man of Buſineſs*.

PRO-

PROLOGUE.

Written by the AUTHOR:

To be ſpoken in the Character of CEALLACHAN.

HEAR me, ye Beaus: ye Critics, hear me too:
By me, the Author humbly ſues to you:
Requeſts your favour in his pending cauſe;
And from your kindneſs only, hopes applauſe.
That managers have ſurer means, we know—
Our Bard, alas! no orders can beſtow.
'Midſt many dangers, many dreadful fears,
One gleam of hope the affrighted Poet chears.
It muſt be granted that his piece is new;
And novelty, 'tis ſaid, you all purſue.
Full oft hath honeſt Teague been here diſplay'd;
And many a roar have Iriſh blunders made:
The bull, the brogue, are now ſo common grown;
That one would almoſt ſwear they were—your own.
But, lo! to-night, what you ne'er ſaw before,
A tragic hero from Hibernia's ſhore;
Who ſpeaks as you do, both of men and things;
And talks heroics, juſt like other kings.
Iriſh heroics! yonder Cit exclaims!
Who's been to Hackney, and has croſs'd the Thames:
Who forms his judgment from a few dull plays;
And thinks a Porter's, is a nation's phraſe.
To hold forth Nature, once the Stage was meant:
'Tis ſtrangely alter'd from its firſt intent.
Were we by it to judge Ierne's ſons,
They all are honeſt—but they all are clowns.
Yet truth hath ſaid, and I ſhall take her word,
That ſome have grac'd a court—and ſome a cord.
Know ye what part I act, who ſpeak ſo well?
I'd lay my life not one in ten can tell:
So many lines without an Iriſh howl,
Without by Jaſus, or upon my ſhoul:
'Tis ſtrange indeed—nor can I hope belief,
When I declare myſelf, the IRISH CHIEF.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CEALLACHAN, King of Munſter, in love with STIRA,	Mr. MELMOTH.
DUNCAN, Friend to Ceallachan,	Mr. WILMOT.
SITRICK, Chief of the Danes in Ireland, and a Prince of the royal blood of Denmark,	Mr. SPARKS, jun.
PHARON, General to Sitrick, in love with Stira alſo,	Mr. KANE.
CLEONES, Friend to Pharon,	———
BEDA, Wife to Sitrick, ſecretly in love with Ceallachan,	Mrs. T. BARRY.
STIRA, Siſter to Sitrick, and in love with Ceallachan alſo,	Mrs. SPARKS.

OFFICERS, GUARDS, ATTENDANTS, &c.

SCENE, *DUBLIN, and the Country adjacent.*

THE PATRIOT KING, &c.

ACT I.

SCENE, *Palace of* Dublin.

STIRA, BEDA.

STIRA.

AT length, my Beda, is the time arriv'd,
When anxious doubts and fears ſhall be no more.
The great Ceallachan this morning comes,
Comes to beſtow felicity ſupreme.
Not even Hope, with all her flatt'ring train,
Had promis'd to my wiſhes ſuch ſucceſs.

BEDA.

His virtues well I know, and own indeed,
His worth unrivall'd ſends its luſtre forth:
Yet ſtill 'tis ſtrange that Sitrick ſhould unite,

To Denmark's royal line, its greateſt foe.
What will each ſubject ſay, when they behold
Him who hath ſpilt their deareſt kindred's blood,
Thus honour'd by our chief---and thus eſpous'd?---

STIRA.

The Danes to virtue are not yet ſo loſt,
But they will give that praiſe his actions claim;
Nor can they blame the conduct that deſtroy'd---
No wanton quarrel urg'd him to the war:
To ſave his country from the Daniſh yoke
He drew his ſword; and by his conqu'ring arm,
At once ſecur'd its freedom, and his crown.
Sitrick ſhould rather have his people's thanks
For making thus a deadly foe their friend,
Who ſtill hath brought diſhonour on their arms,
And ſent them vanquiſh'd from the field of death.

BEDA.

E'en ſhould the Danes theſe look'd-for rites approve,
Hath e'er this hero giv'n one proof of love?
Seldom do princes from affection wed;
To politics they oft muſt yield their choice.
Perhaps his people, tir'd of blood and war,
Requeſt him to accept thy offer'd hand,
And thus reſtore them to the ſweets of peace---
What then can Stira hope but cold reſpect?---
Will cold reſpect repay a flame like thine?

STIRA.

O Beda! do not thus diſturb my mind,
Nor raiſe up thoughts that would for ever blaſt
My promis'd harveſt of unequall'd bliſs --
Did I not think his heart beat high with love,

Did

Did I not think that heart was wholly mine,
This hand ſhould ſooner end my hated life,
Than at the altar join Ceallachan's.---

BEDA.

Why then theſe haſty nuptials thus approve,
Whilſt e'en ſuſpicion can afford a doubt?---

STIRA.

Why ſhould I doubt? Do I not know he loves?
His eyes, thoſe true revealers of the ſoul,
Have oft-times told me what his tongue with-held;
Each little act was with attention dreſs'd,
And ev'ry look his tenderneſs proclaim'd---
This is the language of a lover's heart,
This is the language that can ne'er deceive---

BEDA.

The mind that kindly feels for others woes,
With looks of ſoftneſs pours its ready balm,
And ſteals affliction from the eye of ſorrow:
When firſt ye met, you were a captive maid;
Impute not falſely to the pow'r of love,
What gen'rous pity might as well produce.

STIRA.

Oh, no! tho' pity in a heart like his,
Muſt ſympathiſe with ev'ry wretch's woe;
That ſoft regard which cannot be expreſs'd,
Nor yet miſunderſtood, muſt wanting be;
To mutual paſſion it is only known,
And none but thoſe who feel its pow'r believe.

Enter

Enter an Attendant to STIRA.

ATTENDANT.

Madam, a chief arriv'd from Munſter's king
Requeſts admittance.

STIRA.

Go bid him enter. [*Exit Attend.*
O my lov'd friend, a thouſand fears ariſe---
But, lo! the valiant Duncan hither comes:
Than him, none nearer to his monarchs thoughts---

Enter DUNCAN.

Moſt welcome, Sir---

BEDA.

Moſt welcome to theſe walls---
How fares the king? Doth he ſtill his purpoſe hold?
Hath ought prevented his intended ſpeed?

DUNCAN.

Madam, the king with fondeſt ardour burns,
To meet his deſtin'd bride---one hour from hence,
He with impatience waits for my return.
Mean time, ſome ſecret thoughts for her I bear,
Whom ſoon I hope to call my queen.---

STIRA.

Speak out.
Whate'er it is, 'tis ſafe in Beda's breaſt.---

DUNCAN.

This morn retir'd beneath a ſhady bow'r,
My royal Lord in terms like theſe, addreſs'd
Mine ear---Go tell the lovely fair, he ſaid,

Whoſe

Whoſe charms unrivall'd rule thy monarch's heart,
That ſhe alone can happineſs beſtow;
Can give that bliſs, which crowns might ſeek to buy,
Yet find the purchaſe far beyond their reach.
But, oh! my Duncan, tell the beauteous maid,
If in her breaſt a dearer object lives,
Or ſhould a brother's will her hand direct
Where inclination doth not prompt its courſe---
Oh! tell her, I reſign theſe promis'd rites,
And ſingly wretched to my throne return.---

STIRA.

Go tell the gen'rous prince from whom you came,
(For Stira's ſoul diſdains her ſex's arts)
That ev'ry future bliſs on him depends---
Tell him, without a bluſh I own my love,
And view with rapture the approaching hour,
That makes me ever his.---

DUNCAN.

---Oh! heavenly ſounds;
Thus let me to my gracious princeſs kneel,
And on her hand my faithful homage pay.---
Now to th' impatient king I'll quickly fly;
And give a tranſport never felt before. [*Exit.*

STIRA.

Each doubting thought begone---with equal flame
His boſom glows, and Stira is moſt bleſs'd --
In pleaſing tranſport ev'ry nerve is wrap'd---
My heart as if impatient to take flight,
And ſpring to where its wiſhes long have been,
Is ſcarce contain'd in this, its little cell---
Beda forgive the raptures of a lover—

Some

Some ordinary cares demand me now;
This morning paſt, love claims each future hour.---
[*Exit.*

Manet BEDA.

To one unpractis'd in deceit, how hard
To wear a ſmile whilſt daggers pierce the heart,
And ſeem delighted with what wounds it moſt.
Theſe nuptials make a wretch of me indeed.---
Sure happineſs can ne'er that boſom fill,
Where paſſion prompts, what honor muſt forbid---
This king belov'd by me, by Sitrick's wife,
Now haſtes to wed the ſiſter of my lord---
Diſtraction!---what!---am I then doom'd to ſee
The man my heart adores, another's---No---
That, that, I cannot bear.---I'll to my huſband,
With Daniſh pride inflame his haughty ſoul,
And ſtop theſe rites, ſo fatal to my peace. [*Exit.*

SCENE *changes to a different Part of* Dublin.

Enter PHARON *and* CLEONES.

PHARON.

O my Cleones, I knew not till this hour,
The wondrous height my paſſion hath attain'd:
The beauteous Stira mingles with each wiſh,
Beats in each pulſe, and throbs thro' ev'ry vein:
---And ſhall this day beſtow her on another?
Firſt ſhall this hand implant a dagger here,
Or ſheath one in the heart of Munſter's king.

CLEO-

CLEONES.

What madneſs doth poſſeſs thy heated mind?
This Stira never can be thine---even grant
Ceallachan theſe nuptials had refus'd;
What hopes for thee remain'd?---Sitrick, thou know'ſt,
Beholds even kings with ſcorn;---ſo high he rates
The ancient honours of his royal line.

PHARON.

Where is the mighty merit to deſcend
From kings, who trace their boaſted anceſtry
Even from the fabled Deities of Heav'n?
Flows there a richer current thro' the veins?
Pants in the breaſt a more exalted worth?
Doth clay ennobled, purify the ſoul;
Or give a virtue humbler birth denies?---

CLEONES.

No, Pharon; but the world is here the judge;
We may condemn, not alter its decree.
Yet ſay, had Fortune been a kinder dame,
How would the beauteous Stira be diſpoſed?
Doth ſhe behold thee with a partial eye,
And bluſh compliance on thy wiſhes?

PHARON.

---Alas!
No tender glance hath e'er allay'd my pain,
No ſweet confuſion bluſh'd a kind conſent;
Yet do I love her to that pitch of frenzy,
She muſt, ſhe ſhall be mine---

CLEONES.

---She muſt be yours!---
O impotence of paſſion!---Doth not this hour,

This very hour, beſtow her on another,
And blaſt thy fooliſh hopes for ever?---

PHARON.

---This hour,
If Fortune favours, gives her to my arms---
For know, my friend, e'en now the ready bark
Unfurls her canvaſs to the coming winds,
Spreads every ſail to catch the precious breeze,
And waft us from Ierne's ſhore---

CLEONES.

---What then
Can Pharon ſtoop, thus meanly to poſſeſs
The injur'd form of weeping innocence?---
Think'ſt thou Love's holy raptures can be thine?
When, not the ſoft murmurs of the yielding maid,
Nor yet the ſweet reſiſtance beauty gives,
But tears and harſh complaints aſſail thine ear,
Pierce thro' thy heart, and load thee with remorſe:
Then Pharon wilt thou curſe this hateful day,
And damn that hour which gave thee being---

PHARON.

---O ſtop---
Recall not feelings that were lull'd to reſt;
But lend thy aid to bear the fair one hence:
Let Pharon claſp this charmer to his breaſt,
And revel in ecſtatic ſcenes of bliſs.

CLEONES.

Such are indeed the ſcenes of mutual love---
When the fond female in each look declares
The riſing tumults of a ſoft deſire:
When, fearful of ſenſations yet unknown,

The

The bluſhing maid with downcaſt eye conſents,
And trembling fills a lover's arms---then, then
Indeed, to claſp her to the panting breaſt,
To ſoothe with all the eloquence of love,
And drive thoſe idle fears away---is bliſs,
Is ecſtacy divine!---But you, my Lord,
Oh! what have you to hope?---you---

PHARON.

---Cleones ceaſe---
At once declare there's danger in the taſk
That Friendſhip hath requir'd; nor meanly ſeek
To hide thy fears beneath the veil of honour.--

CLEONES.

You are unkind, my Lord; I might ſay more:
Where obligations bind the heart, the obliger
Should be more delicate---

PHARON.

---And the obliged
More grateful.---

CLEONES.

---More grateful cannot be---
Had you but bade me ruſh on certain death,
You ſhould have ſeen how little life was priz'd.
My honour is, I own, a dearer ſtake;
Nor can ev'n gratitude oblige Cleones
To part with virtue.---

PHARON.

---This wond'rous virtue too
No doubt will make thee haſte to Sitrick's preſence,
And all my ſcheme betray.---

CLEONES.

---Fear not, my Lord:
You ſpoke in friendſhip, as a friend I heard.
So ſacred is ſuch converſe held by me,
That racks and tortures ſhould extort in vain.
The poſt, which, by your favour was obtain'd,
I here reſign---And now, my Lord, farewell---
You'll eaſy find a more obſequious friend;
A truer is perhaps beyond your reach.

[*Exit.*

Manet PHARON.

Oh! thou haſt touch'd me to the very ſoul,
Made me examine this my purpos'd deed,
And ſtruck a horror o'er the conſcious mind:
The very crime with which I raſhly charg'd thee
Rebounds upon myſelf---by Sitrick's power,
Plac'd in the firſt high office of the ſtate,
I ſeek to bear his lovely ſiſter hence,
And thus repay the bounteous hand that rais'd me.
Oh! I ſhall ſeek thee my Cleones,
Fall on thy neck, and wet thee with my tears,
Till thou, relenting, feel ſoft pity riſe,
And giv'ſt a pardon to repenting folly;
Then wilt thou teach me to regain repoſe,
And conquer paſſion, by the force of honour.

[*Exit.*

Enter SITRICK, BEDA.

Scene changes to the Palace.

BEDA.

Worthleſs would be the partner of thy bed,
If ſhe concealed ought affecting thee.

The

The people murmur, and with loud outcry
Declare their hatred of theſe purpos'd rites.
Shall he, they ſay, whoſe ſword ſo oft hath reek'd
With fathers', brothers', and with kinſmens' gore,
Now light the nuptial torch amidſt our grief!
Much more than this, they publicly declare:
Should Sitrick ſtill perſiſt, Oh! who can tell
Where ſuch repinings end!---

SITRICK.

---Thanks to thy love;
But Sitrick fears no danger from ſuch threats.
E'er yet to-morrow bids the world adieu,
Their praiſe, not cenſure, ſhall my zeal reward.

BEDA.

Truſt not, my Lord, to ſuch uncertain hopes,
Nor think to lead the mean, ignoble crowd,
By Reaſon's force. In vain doth wiſdom try
To calm their paſſions, and their wrath reſtrain:
When thoughtleſs fury ſpurs, away they run,
And ev'ry ſtep leaves judgment more behind.

SITRICK.

Fear not the prudent conduct of thy Lord;
Well ſkill'd, I hold the reins of ſov'reign pow'r,
Know when to treat men with an eaſy hand,
And how to curb them in their mad career.

BEDA.

But grant thy people ſhould their rage reſign:
Can Sitrick ſtoop to join his royal houſe
To Munſter's petty king?---Where now that pride,
Which once inſpir'd the boſom of my lord?---
Haſt thou forgiv'n that hand, ſo oft uprear'd,

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To Munſter's petty king?---Where now that pride,
Which once inſpir'd the boſom of my lord?---
Haſt thou forgiv'n that hand, ſo oft uprear'd,

To

To pluck the laurel from thy brow, to blaſt
Thy glory, and o'erturn each conqueſt paſt,
By preſent ſhame and deep diſgrace.---

SITRICK.

---Forgiv'n!
But little doſt thou know the ſoul of Sitrick---
Vengeance alone, for wrongs like mine, atone.---

BEDA.

And as a proof of which, you ſeek to give
A ſiſter to his arms!---

SITRICK.

---Well may'ſt thou ſcorn
The ſeeming baſeneſs. Yet know, my Beda,
Such muſt the glorious ſequel be, that you,
Even you, ſhall give applauſe.---

BEDA.

---What? ſhall I praiſe
The timorous dictates of a poor diſmay?
Prudence perhaps may juſtify the deed;
Perhaps the beauteous Stira may perſuade
This conquering monarch to with-hold his arms,
And ſpare the timid Dane.---

SITRICK.

---Nay, taunt not thus---
The Danes no more ſhall feel his power---e'en now
Doth Munſter totter on the verge of ruin;
And all her laurels fade, to bloom no more.---

BEDA.

Ha! what ſay'ſt thou? explain thy doubtful words?

SITRICK.

SITRICK.

The event my hidden meaning ſhall unfold.---

BEDA.

I pr'ythee, Sitrick, indulge my curious ear,
And let thy ſecret purpoſe be reveal'd.---

SITRICK.

Farewell---I know thy ſex's weakneſs better---
Eager to hear, impatient to reveal;
Give but a ſecret to the breaſt of woman,
Some fav'rite female ſhares the ſacred truſt,
Who to another muſt diſcloſe it too;
Till thus, 'tis whiſper'd o'er a prying world. [*Exit.*

Manet BEDA.

Thoughts ruſh upon me, that increaſe, not heal
The wounds within my breaſt---Some dark deſign,
Some deep-laid ſtratagem my fears diſplay,
Full of deſtruction to th' Hibernian king;
Whoſe open unſuſpicious ſoul, ne'er thought
Of deeds in others which himſelf abhor'd.---
Sitrick is ſubtle, cruel, and ſo dead
To all the finer feelings of the mind,
Where honour dwells,---that virtue in a foe,
But heightens and inflames his rage.---Ah, why!
Allur'd by title and the farce of ſtate,
Will woman throw her happineſs away?
I knew this Sitrick well, nay, loath'd him;
Yet caught by grandeur, gave my plighted faith:
Too late repentance wounds my tortur'd breaſt,
Too late I feel an unavailing flame,
And prove the torment of a vain deſire. [*Exit.*

End of ACT FIRST.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE, *Palace of* Dublin.

SITRICK, PHARON.

SITRICK.

DRAW near my faithful Pharon---ſtill haſt thou been
The partner of my counſels and my arms;
And ever have I found thee as I hop'd,
True to thy truſt, and loyal to thy prince.
Then know, that e'er this ſun revolves its courſe,
The man whom Sitrick calls his greateſt foe
Shall be no more---Ceallachan ſhall die.---

PHARON.

Shall die!---forgive the amazement that I feel
At ſuch a ſtrange reverſe, and let me aſk
What mean theſe gaudy preparations here,
That indicate the joyful bridal feaſt?
What meant the embaſſy to Munſter's court,
That offer'd gentle peace to all its realm,
And beauteous Stira to its monarch's bed?---

SITRICK.

Why, all was meant to make deſtruction ſure.
The wily ſerpent, e'er he ſtings, diſplays
A thouſand beauties to delight the eye,
And tempt the unwary traveller's approach;
Then quickly darts upon his certain prey:
Thus Munſter's king beholds fair Stira's charms,
Nor dreams that he advances to his fate.

PHARON.

PHARON.

But how accompliſh this thy purpos'd ſcheme?
The world proclaims the wiſdom of thy foe;
He ſure requir'd ſome hoſtage of thy faith;
Nor truſts his perſon, without ample proof
Of ſafety to himſelf and to his train.

SITRICK.

Thou know'ſt him not, nor doth the fooliſh world;
It thinks him wiſe, I prove its judgment falſe---
No ſooner did he ſpy the gilded bait,
Than down it went, quick as my wiſhes aſk'd;
Nor ſhall he find the well diſguiſed hook,
Till Sitrick, like a ſkilful angler, ſtrike,
And undeceive him at the price of life.

PHARON.

But ſay, my lord, from whence thy plan aroſe;
And how conducted?---

SITRICK.

---Thou ſhalt hear, my friend.---
---When laſt---(perdition ſeize his conqu'ring arm)
When laſt Ceallachan o'ercame my troops,
And drove me vanquiſh'd from the bloody field;
My wife, my ſiſter too, thou know'ſt were ta'en,
And led in triumph to the Iriſh court:
(But out of that ſhall ſpring my great revenge);
For there, the youthful monarch's amorous heart,
Open to love, receiv'd the piercing ſhaft,
And Stira's beauty all his ſoul ſubdu'd.---
Inform'd of this, I brought it to my aid,
And offer'd her the bond of future peace:
The lover fir'd with recollection ſtrong

Of all the graces of her lovely form,
Now haſtens here, nor once demanded ought
To bind the treaty, or ſecure himſelf.

PHARON.

Pardon, my Lord, the freedom of my tongue,
And hear thoſe cooler thoughts thy welfare prompts---
Tho' much I wiſh deſtruction on thy foe;
Yet muſt I think, thy ſafety will forbid
To execute what now thou haſt propos'd:
Reflect on all thoſe valiant dauntleſs tribes
Ceallachan commands;---whoſe meaneſt troops
Would gladly forfeit life for dear revenge:
Then image to thyſelf, reſentment rous'd
By ſuch a deed; and prudence muſt declare
How fatal the attempt.---

SITRICK.

---Prudence may paint
In ſtrongeſt lines each dreadful conſequence;
But, by yon heav'n he dies: my mad'ning ſoul
Now rages with revenge, which nought can cool
But his deſtruction:---Let me but behold
His lifeleſs corſe, and all his hoſts may come.---

PHARON.

Since nought can change my prince's fix'd reſolve,
Let caution dictate what thy vengeance claims:
Let him be made the captive of thy arms:
Then may'ſt thou offer liberty and life,
On theſe conditions---that he'll ſtraight yield up
Each place of ſtrength and fortreſs in his ſway.---
If he conſents, his people's love is ſuch,
That they will ſure comply.---Then may we find

Some

Some after-means to give the wish'd-for death:
Thus ſhall thy vengeance have its full demand,
And ſafety be ſecur'd.---

SITRICK.

---Thou counſel'ſt well;
It ſhall be ſo.---But haſte, my Pharon, haſte;
Lead forth a choſen band, and quickly gain
The rear of Munſter's train---ſhould ought inſpire
Ceallachan with doubt, or in his mind
Suſpicion raiſe, this will prevent retreat.
[*Exit.*

Manet PHARON.

The proſpect brightens, ſhe may yet be mine,
Nor honour, nor Cleones interpoſe---
Ha! what will Cleones ſay, when he beholds
The faith of nations, and of men betray'd---
When he beholds, perhaps, a monarch's blood
To vengeance ſhed, and ſpilt by Pharon's aid?---
Oh, no! that muſt not be---I'll watch with care,
Each conſcious ſting that pierces Sitrick's breaſt,
Diſplay the horrors that await remorſe,
And change the bloody purpoſe of his ſoul.
[*Exit.*

SCENE *changes to a woody Country near* Dublin.

Enter two IRISH OFFICERS *in converſation.*

1ſt OFFICER.

'Tis ſtrange indeed---Duncan to Dublin gone,
The King in thought wrap'd up---All is not right---

2d OFFICER.

May Heav'n avert whate'er diſturbs his peace:
Sure he whoſe ample ſoul delights in all
That tends to aid the meaneſt of mankind,
Can ne'er deſerve a pang.---

1ſt OFFICER.

---None are exempt
From life's mis-haps---But where's Ceallachan?
Haſt lately ſeen him?

2d OFFICER.

---Yes,---e'en now we met;
He enter'd yonder wood, whoſe leafy top
A pleaſing umbrage ſpreads, that ſoothes the mind
Where contemplation reigns, and leads it on
To pour its feelings forth beneath thoſe bow'rs,
Whoſe ſilent ſhade our confidence invites---
Behold where now he walks, cloſe to yon oak,
With folded arms;---with ſlow and thoughtful pace,
In awful meditation loſt to all.

1ſt OFFICER.

Let us retire, nor rudely interrupt
His ſolitary courſe---when thus inclin'd
For ſolitude and converſe with one's ſelf,
How irkſome even thoſe whom moſt we prize.

2d OFFICER.

The obſervation's juſt---this way let's go;
Nor ſeen by him, intrude upon his thoughts---

[*They go out on the oppoſite ſide, from that by which* Ceallachan *enters.*

CEALLA-

CEALLACHAN *Solus.*

How ſtrange is man!---his wiſhes when obtain'd,
But ſhow the fool he wants a ſomething ſtill---
Speed, ſpeed, ye loitering moments of ſuſpence;
No more diſtract me with thy hopes and fears;
Give me to know my fate, whate'er it be,
For dread of evil is the worſt of ills.
But, lo! my Duncan comes, and from his eye
The ſparkling luſtre ſhoots forth heart-felt joy---

Enter DUNCAN.

Oh! ſpeak, my friend, and let thy words proclaim
What looks expreſſive have already told.

DUNCAN.

Let joy unbounded reign throughout thy breaſt;
For know, my royal liege, the beauteous maid,
With modeſt boldneſs owns a mutual flame---
"Go tell the generous prince you ſerve," ſhe ſaid,
"That every future bliſs on him depends.
"Tell him, without a bluſh, I own my love,
"And view with rapture the approaching hour
"That makes me ever his"---

CEALLACHAN.

---This, this is bliſs;
Thus to poſſeſs that moſt ſupreme delight,
The having pow'r to make my Stira bleſs'd.
Now ev'ry gloomy view Deſpair had bred,
But ſerves to make the proſpect pleaſe the more.
O my friend, how can I e'er thy zeal repay
For tidings ſuch as theſe!---

DUNCAN.

---I'm amply paid.
Wretched the man, whoſe hard, unfeeling heart

Receives

Receives not pleaſure from another's bliſs:
But when my King, my friend, is happy made,
It then is ecſtacy---

CEALLACHAN.

---I know it is,
To gen'rous ſouls like thine. Theſe happy rites
Shall ſheathe the deadly ſteel; our glitt'ring arms
No longer for deſtruction us'd, ſhall range
In pleaſing order o'er our peaceful walls,
And give their ſplendor to the ſocial feaſt.
Let other monarchs mad ambition boaſt,
Whilſt I purſue love's happier ſcenes;
Yield all my ſoul to its ecſtatic bliſs;
Poſſeſs'd of Stira, court the peaceful ſhade,
Nor idly wander in purſuit of fame.

DUNCAN.

O flatter not thyſelf, my royal Lord;
Neceſſity will oft oblige thee to reſume
Thy arms neglected, and the martial field;
Will oft oblige thee to forſake the couch,
Where love's delicious raptures lull thy ſoul;
For tranquil ſcenes belong not to a throne.

CEALLACHAN.

Think not thy monarch's ſword ſhall e'er be ſheath'd,
When lawleſs inſult calls its vengeance forth.
But ſtill the moment of returning peace
Shall be embrac'd:---Still ſhall my tend'reſt care
Be then employ'd to heal Deſtruction's wounds;
Each peaceful art ſhall then renew its toil,
And Induſtry reflouriſh o'er the land.

DUNCAN.

DUNCAN.

Munſter, what happy days for thee's in ſtore;
Whoſe monarch thus, in all his ſchemes, purſues
His country's welfare and his people's good!

CEALLACHAN.

O rather ſpeak the happineſs of him,
To whom the indulgent hand of Fate hath giv'n
A pow'r to gain ſuch godlike ends as theſe.---
Is there a tranſport that this world can boaſt,
Equal to that which in the boſom glows,
When from the low'ring brow of wretchedneſs
You pluck its ſorrows, planting in their room
The chearful, glad'ning look, Content inſpires?
Oh! grant not merit to the only act
That pays me for the troubles of a throne.

DUNCAN.

E'en Nature form'd thee for a king, and gave
A ſoul exalted as the rank you bear.

CEALLACHAN.

You view me, Duncan, with a partial eye.
But come, my friend, the beauteous Stira calls,
And all a lover's wiſhes urge me hence. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to a different Part of the Wood.*

Enter PHARON *and a* Daniſh CAPTAIN.

PHARON.

Thou ſeeſt where yonder hill its ſummit rears,
Whoſe ſpacious ſide's with branching oaks o'erſpread,
That hide in ſhade the ſtream that runs beneath---

Thither

Thither extend the left, in ſilent march,
And as the Iriſh troop proceeds, advance:
Should you perceive the ſignal we've agreed,
With rapid pace thy gallant ſoldiers lead
To join with mine, and intercept the foe.
Thou to the poſt aſſign'd, and I to mine. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes again.*

CEALLACHAN, DUNCAN, *and the* IRISH TROOPS *re-enter.*

DUNCAN.

Truſt me my liege, ſome treachery's on foot:
Amidſt thoſe diſtant trees, the Daniſh garb
This moment caught mine eye:---the claſh of arms
I alſo heard, or elſe mine ears deceive:
Allow me to explore the neighbouring wood,
And ſee that ſafety on thy ſteps attend.

CEALLACHAN.

No dread of danger in my breaſt I feel.---
But come, my Duncan, ſatisfy thy doubts;
Lead to the ſpot from whence theſe fears ariſe.

SCENE *changes.*

Enter PHARON *and* Daniſh CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

This way they march, nor longer ſeek our walls:
A moment brings them up.---

PHARON.

PHARON.

---Then let us haſte
To ſtop their purpos'd courſe; but ſtrictly charge
Each valiant Dane to ſpare the monarch's life;---
For he who takes it, pays it with his own. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes.*

Enter CEALLACHAN, DUNCAN, *and the* IRISH *Train.*

CEALLACHAN.

Ha! is every paſs beſet?---

DUNCAN.

---Each paſs is cloſ'd
With thronging Danes---one only choice remains,
To yield ſubmiſſion, or to part with life.---

CEALLACHAN.

Oh! for a thouſand of my Dalgais now!---
But ſay, my gen'rous friends, how beats each heart?
Doth glory nerve each valiant warriors' arm?
Will ye ignobly live, or bravely die?

ALL.

We ſcorn ignoble life---we'll bravely die.---

CEALLACHAN *draws his ſword.*

Then, thus I hurl defiance at the foe.
What are ten thouſand ſlaves oppos'd to men
Who fight for freedom, and for glory burn!
Let's on, my gallant youths, there is the path

That leads to Munſter, to each ſocial tie:
Think what your country, what your ſires demand;
Think of a monarch's wrongs, and follow me. [*Exeunt.*

[*Fighting is heard for ſome time behind the Scenes, after which* Ceallachan *and* Duncan *enter engaged with* Pharon, *and a number of the* Danes.]

PHARON.

Yield up thy ſword, nor urge deſtruction on.---

CEALLACHAN.

Yes, ſlave, when life's no more.---

PHARON.

---What madneſs this!
To force like ours, what is thy ſtrength oppos'd?---
Submit, and taſte our mercy.---

CEALLACHAN.

---Thy mercy, wretch!
Thus I revenge a monarch's wrongs---

DUNCAN.

---And thus---

[*Whilſt they are ruſhing on the enemy, a party comes behind and diſarms them.*]

CEALLACHAN.

Off! cowards off!---

DUNCAN.

---Unhand me, villains!---

PHARON.

PHARON.

Soldiers, your pris'ners guard with due reſpect;
Our ſcatter'd troops my care demands---

[*Exit.*

[*The* Daniſh *Soldiers remain at a little diſtance.*]

[Ceallachan *and* Duncan *come forward.*]

CEALLACHAN.

Oh, Duncan! I am ſick at heart---behold
Thoſe ſtreams of blood, that lately flow'd for me---
Each valiant youth, who round me fought, hath paid
The tribute of his life, ſave only you;
Thou too art doom'd to meet a monſter's rage,
And to his vengeance bleed---All-gracious Heav'n
Heap ſorrows yet unheard-of on this head;
But, oh! in pity ceaſe theſe cruel ſhafts
That pierce me thro' the boſoms of my friends.

DUNCAN.

Let not one thought for me diſturb thy mind;
My friendſhip grew not by the ſoft'ring gales
That proſperous fortune blows; nor can the blaſts
Of wint'ry ſtorms, rais'd by adverſity,
Deſtroy the hardy plant.---To die with thee?
'Tis nought---have we not ſtill ſince earlieſt youth,
Gone hand in hand;---no ſeparate pleaſures known;
In joy, in grief, ſtill equally partook?
And would'ſt thou then at laſt ſhake off thy friend?

CEALLACHAN.

Let me embrace the nobleſt of mankind.
Thus with the man whoſe ſad appearance ſhows
A ſhatter'd fortune and a clouded day;
Whoſe gay companions of his brighter hours,

Vaniſh with them, and leave him to his fate;
If then a real friend appear, it chears
His drooping ſoul, his value well he knows,
And claſps the kind conſoler to his breaſt.

PHARON *enters, and ſpeaks.*

PHARON.

Moſt valiant King, and you brave Sir, muſt ſtraight
To Dublin's walls proceed---Sitrick commands,
And his commands I muſt obey---

CEALLACHAN.

---I know
Thou art his ſlave, nor ſhall I talk to thee
Of broken faith, and nations' rights betray'd---
Lead on, we'll follow, Sir---O now, my friend,
Undaunted let us meet this final ſhock,
The laſt that mortals know---Tho' none have pow'r
To ſhove misfortune back, or change the courſe
By Heav'n's high will decreed; yet all may riſe
Superior to thoſe ills they can't prevent.
Hence, to that world we'll take our anxious flight,
Where ſacred Virtue only meets reward.

[*Exeunt.*

End of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE, *Palace.*

SITRICK *diſcovered in a Room of State, a* Captain *in waiting.*

SITRICK.

GO tell the gallant Pharon, that Sitrick burns
To thank his faithful zeal.---Bid him conduct
His pris'ners here.--- [*Exit* Capt.
---My plan muſt now ſucceed---
This bar remov'd, my arms ſhall quick prevail
O'er all Hibernia's Chiefs:---her fertile plains
Shall own me for their lord, and all her wealth
Shall ſoon be mine.---But then the world condemns,
Deteſts the deed; and brands my hated name
With ev'ry term that infamy can give.
Now conſcience too uplifts her awful head,
And in the midſt of all my triumphs
Stings my boſom with remorſe;---deſtroys each joy,
And every ſcene diſturbs--- *(a long pauſe.)*
---What---yield him up?
Reſign, forego the advantage I have gain'd?---
Ambition and revenge forbid retreat,
And I obey.---Welcome, my faithful Pharon,

[PHARON *enters with* CEALLACHAN DUNCAN, Danes, *&c.*]

Well

Well haſt thou fill'd the poſt to thee conſign'd,
Whate'er it fits me to beſtow, demand:
Thou ſhalt not aſk in vain.---

PHARON.

---Thus to receive
My royal chief's applauſe, is great reward:
Yet Pharon's wiſhes would prefer a ſuit,
He fears might give offence.—

SITRICK.

—Speak freely then;
For on my ſoul, ſo much I prize thy worth,
I know not ought I would to thée refuſe.

PHARON.

Embolden'd by this kindneſs of my lord,
Some fitter ſeaſon Pharon will preſume
To be thy ſuitor.—

SITRICK.

—Well then, be it ſo.—
At length, Ceallachan, our arms prevail;
No more art thou victorious o'er the Danes;
But now the priſ'ner of their conquering ſwords.—
Thou know'ſt what vengeance on thy head impells;
Yet hear our mercy—If now thou wilt conſent
To what our terms require, thy liberty,
And Stira's hand, may ſtill be thine.—

(Ceallachan *gives a look of anger and contempt.*)

—Ha! what!
Doſt thou behold me with an eye of ſcorn?

Doſt

Doſt thou not know my power? doſt thou not know
That if I will, this moment is thy laſt!—

(Ceallachan *repeats his look, and ſtill remains ſilent.*)

Again! nor even deign to anſwer me?
By Heav'n I'll break thy ſpirit, and teach thee, Prince,
Preſumption's due.—

CEALLACHAN.

—Say'ſt thou, preſumption's due?—
Tho' to hold converſe with a wretch like thee,
Is far beneath the man whoſe actions flow
From the pure fountain of an honeſt heart;
Yet will I ſtoop to ſtrike thee with diſmay.
Soon ſhall my valiant Dalgais, and the tribes
That ſpread along the Shannon's fertile banks,
With ſwords high brandiſh'd tear thee from thy walls:
Soon ſhall they give thee what thy deeds deſerve;
Soon make thee an example to mankind;
That fear henceforth the villain may deter,
Where virtue binds not, and where honour fails.—

SITRICK.

Haſte, ſlaves, and bear this haughty monarch hence:
Let ev'ry keeneſt torture be prepar'd
That art can teach—when his disjointed limbs,
And mangled fleſh in agony ſhall writhe;
We'll ſee if thus he'll brave our wrath.—

CEALLACHAN.

—Then learn
Inhuman Dane, ſuch cruelty is vain:
Perhaps this feeble fleſh may fail its lord;

May tremble on the rack, and own its pangs:
But the pure ſoul ſhall glory in its truth;
Shall riſe exulting to its kindred ſkies,
And look with horror on a ſtate like thine.

SITRICK.

Hence—lead him to his fate—

PHARON.

—Let me intreat
A ſhort delay—when rage to reaſon yields,
He'll quick comply.—

SITRICK.

—Well then, at thy requeſt
He ſees to-morrow's dawn.—But know, proud king,
If at the riſing ſun you ſhould refuſe,
That Waterford and Caſhell's lofty tow'rs,
That Corke and Limerick's ample walls, with all
The towns of ſtrength in Munſter's wide domain,
Be inſtant yielded to the Daniſh ſway;
Thy life ſhall glut my vengeance!—

CEALLACHAN.

—Such threats are idle,
When apply'd to me—for know, I ſcorn a life
That's in thy pow'r to give or take away.—

SITRICK.

When all the dread array of Fate appears,
Then wilt thou beg, perhaps, may beg in vain,
Nor gain the boon you aſk!—

CEAL-

CEALLACHAN.

—Think'ſt thou my ſoul
So little knows the firmneſs of a man,
That poorly frighted by the trick of woe,
Shock'd by a mere parade, I could reſign,
A loyal nation to tyrannic ſway?
Had you e'er felt the flame of patriot fire,
Whoſe purifying blaze ennobles man,
And baniſhes each baſe, each ſelfiſh thought,
Far from the breaſt wherein it deigns to dwell,
You then would know a monarch's fix'd reſolve;
Would know, I court the terrors you diſplay,
And, for my country's welfare, long to die!

SITRICK.

'Tis greatly talk'd---but know, this ſingle day
Is thine. Conſider well, and think on life.

CEALLACHAN.

And think on life!---Each word degrades thee more,
And pity almoſt mingles with my rage.
But why thus talk to thee? where we deſpiſe,
Silence is the beſt reply.

SITRICK.

Wilt thou ſtill dare
To brave our wrath? We'll try theſe boaſting words.
Haſte, my Pharon, with chains this hero bind;
Let coarſeſt food his hunger ſerve, nor let
One ray of light illume his diſmal cell.
In other walls let Duncan be confin'd.
Not e'en thy friend ſhall ſhare or ſooth thy woes;
Thou ſhalt be prov'd.

CEALLACHAN.

---Come, and behold the proof---
Come, and behold me in the dungeon's gloom,
Superior to the ills that throng around;
And learn to value what thou can'ſt not know.
Then quickly lead me to the ſtroke of Fate;
With love of country throbbing at my heart
I'll meet the deſtin'd blow, and ſhow thee, Sitrick,
My life was in thy pow'r, but not my honour.

[*Exeunt* Ceallachan, Duncan, Pharon, *Guards, &c.*

Manet SITRICK.

By Heav'n, to hear the vauntings of this man,
One would ſuppoſe he was the victor!

STIRA *enters in great diſorder, and kneels.*

STIRA.

Oh, with a brother's eye behold me kneel,
Nor let a ſiſter's heart, with woe o'ercharg'd,
Burſt from its feeble bounds, and ruſh to death.
If e'er our parents to thy mem'ry riſe,
Who with their laſt, their lateſt breath bequeath'd
My helpleſs youth to Sitrick's care! if e'er
You felt one ſpark of fond paternal love
Ariſing in thy breaſt; oh! grant my pray'r---
Let Munſter's King to freedom be reſtor'd,
And bleſs thy ſiſter with the man ſhe loves.

SITRICK.

Away, thou ſtain to Sitrick and thy race!
How dar'ſt thou call our royal parents' ſhades

To

To witneſs to thy ſhame?—degen'rate wretch
To let thy country's foe engage thy heart,
And warm thy breaſt to love!——I'll caſt thee off,
Nor own thee of my blood——

STIRA.

——Oh! think, my Lord,
And let theſe tears, this bleeding heart prevail.
'Twas you that rais'd my fond, expecting hopes,
To that delightful ſtate where late they ſoar'd.
O do not then thus blaſt each promis'd bliſs,
Thus drive me to deſpair!---

SITRICK.

---Thou wanton, ceaſe---
Doſt thou not bluſh to own thy country's hate,
The object of thy baſe impetuous flame——
The man, of whom our babes with horror ſpeak,
And weeping matrons curſe?——

STIRA.

——Wrong me not thus,
Nor wound a wretched ſiſter's ſpotleſs fame.
No wanton paſſion in my boſom dwells,
No thought that veſtals might not wiſh to own.
If 'tis a crime to ſee and to admire,
Where ev'ry gen'rous tender virtue joins
To form the man——I gladly boaſt my guilt.

SITRICK.

If thus thy tongue wilt riot in the praiſe
Of Sitrick's foe, farewell. I'll hear no more——

[STIRA *holds him.*]

STIRA.

Yet hear me, Sitrick, grant what I implore,
I will not aſk thee for theſe promis'd rites;
Such wiſhes I'll reſign—All I requeſt
Is this——Reſtore him to his country's arms;
Let him be free, and may you be moſt bleſs'd.
Not e'en my ſorrows ſhall diſturb thy peace:
The mourning Stira, from the world retir'd,
Shall ne'er intrude one ſigh t' offend thine ear.
Beneath ſome ſhade my tears ſhall harmleſs flow,
And o'er my cheeks in ſilence glide away,
Till in the grave thy ſiſter's griefs are laid,
And all is huſh'd within the peaceful tomb.

SITRICK.

Why wilt thou plead, to ſave a life he ſcorns?
The haughty monarch braves approaching fate:
My offer'd terms are treated with contempt!
E'en Stira's charms have loſt their wonted force,
Nor can they now ſubdue ſo cool a lover.—

STIRA.

Alas! had he, my Lord, but coolly lov'd,
He had not been by thee betray'd.——

SITRICK.

——In vain
You ſeek to change thy brother's fix'd reſolve;
My terms accepted, can alone reſtore
Ceallachan to liberty and thee.
Haſte then, employ perſuaſion's utmoſt art;

With

With all that matchleſs beauty urge thy ſuit,
Avert his ruin, and regain repoſe.—

[*Exit.*

Enter BEDA, *as* SITRICK *goes out.*

BEDA.

O ſay, my Stira, have thy tears prevail'd?
Have thy entreaties touch'd thy brother's ſoul?
O ſay! is Munſter's monarch doom'd to die,
Or doth ſoft pity melt the tyrant's breaſt,
And ward deſtruction off?——

STIRA.

——Alas! my friend,
Still doubtful is his fate—if he conſents
To Sitrick's terms, the hero yet is mine—
But, oh! thoſe terms have been already tried,
Have been already treated with diſdain.

BEDA.

O could you gain admittance to the King,
Perhaps all-powerful love might lend its aid,
Might change the firmneſs he ſo lately ſhow'd,
And raiſe up wiſhes for a longer life.—

STIRA.

'Tis now my only hope—by Sitrick's will,
Thy Stira haſtes to try this laſt reſource.
Oh! I will quickly ſeek the ſuffering chief;
Uſe all the tender ſoftneſs of my ſex,
Plead the ſweet raptures that await on love,
Melt into tears, and ſteal upon his heart:

Then,

Then, when I find him bending to my wiſhes,
Seize the fond moment, and obtain compliance. [*Exit.*

Manet BEDA.

Go, lovely maid, may angels wait your ſteps,
Inſpire your tongue, and crown you with ſucceſs.
No more I'll ſeek your nuptials to prevent,
No more to miſery add the weight of guilt,
Nor be a rival, where I ſeem a friend.
How dreadful is a ſtate of dark diſguiſe,
When every word muſt ſtudied be, before
It ventures forth—when every look is train'd,
And taught the guilty language of a lie?
Can the deceitful boſom ever know
A bliſs like that which ſwells the noble heart,
Where conſcious rectitude inſpires each thought,
And proudly owns the dictates of the ſoul? [*Exit.*

SCENE *changes.*

Enter PHARON *and* CLEONES.

PHARON.

I ſeiz'd the fav'ring moment fortune gave,
And to the haughty Dane reveal'd my paſſion.
Beyond my hopes he liſt'ned to my ſuit,
Bade me expect his lovely ſiſter's hand,
If at the riſing of to-morrow's ſun,
The monarch ſtill reject his offer'd terms—

CLEONES.

My Lord, I would not willingly offend;
Permit me, therefore, to with-hold my thoughts.

I've

I've learn'd indeed for to reſtrain my tongue,
But cannot utter what I do not feel.—

PHARON.

Nay, then you ſtill remember my offence,
Nor haſt thou yet forgiv'n my fooliſh raſhneſs.—

CLEONES.

Believe me 'tis long ſince forgot.—But ſay,
Why ſhould I wound the feelings of a friend,
And give a cenſure where he hopes applauſe?

PHARON.

O ſpeak, my friend, as thou wert wont to do,
When in our boyiſh days we firſt eſteem'd;
When, from the joyous train of ſportive youths
We choſe each other out; together roam'd,
Together chac'd our rural hours away.
Think of that friendſhip we ſo oft have vow'd,
Nor longer fear you can again offend.—

CLEONES.

Far different were thoſe days which you recall;
Then the pure ſoul, untainted by mankind,
In native innocence ador'd its God,
Diſplay'd the rich perfection Nature gave,
In love with virtue, and of vice afraid.
Oh! Pharon, what a foe to man is man?
When, from the peaceful ſhade of rural life,
They crowd together, corruption flows apace;
Unheard-of crimes ariſe to curſe the world,
And puniſh men, for violated laws.

PHARON.

Happy indeed, our youthful moments paſs'd;
Yet ſituation cannot change the ſoul:
Are we not ſtill the ſame fond friends, Cleones?
Or art thou alter'd, and to Pharon falſe?

CLEONES.

I am the ſame, but thou art chang'd indeed!
Before thy mad ambition led thee on
To ſeek for glory in the Daniſh court,
How would'ſt thou Pharon, have beheld thoſe deeds,
Which now thy ready hand can ſtoop to aid?
How would'ſt thou then have view'd a king betray'd?
One too, whom e'en the malice of a foe
Might ſeek to cenſure, and yet ſeek in vain.
Oh! in thoſe hours of unpolluted life,
Methinks I now behold thy glorious rage;
Thy ready ſteel almoſt unſheath itſelf,
And as the treacherous tale was told, thy eyes
Flaſh lightning from their orbs, whilſt ev'ry nerve
Grew big with manly indignation!—

PHARON.

—Alas,
I feel the juſt reproach:—Yet ſure, my friend,
When for the public, ſtratagem is us'd:
When policy requires a hidden act,
The very colour of the deed is chang'd;
And that, which in the private ſphere of life
Abhorrence claims---then merits our applauſe.

CLEONES.

Oh, Heav'n! where will mankind's preſumption end?
When thus they dare to alter thy decrees,

To

To change thoſe laws their great Creator fram'd,
And give to villainy the praiſe of virtue!
If the aſſaſſin, for the price of blood,
Stab in the dark, and give the hired blow;
If from revenge the poniard be unſheath'd,
And buried in the heart for which 'tis drawn;
You call it murder; and as ſuch you puniſh:
But when the ſtateſman acts beneath the maſk
Of ſeeming peace, and of fictitious treaty,
Till he with ſafety can deſtroy a foe;
Both wealth and honours crown the very act
For which a leſs exalted villain bleeds!

PHARON.

Chide on, chide on; for I have yet ſo much
Of virtue left, as to admire Cleones.
O prove thyſelf a kind, a gen'rous friend;
Point out the way by which I can regain
Thy loſt eſteem, and what is yet ſtill more,
My own applauſe!—

CLEONES.

—O Pharon! aſk thyſelf;
For conſcience is not dead within thy breaſt:
Aſk if Ceallachan deſerves to die;
Aſk if the mourning Stira ſhould be thine;
Examine then the part which you have play'd,
And know the conduct you ſhould now purſue.

PHARON.

Oh! I will haſte, and try my utmoſt ſkill,
To ſave the monarch's life, and ſet him free;

But to reſign the fond, the flatt'ring hope,
Of Stira's being mine, is ſurely more
Than even Virtue can demand.—

CLEONES.

—You dream!
Where is the hope I aſk you to reſign?
Doth not the lovely maid e'en now deplore
A captive lover and averted rites?
O haſte, my lord, a gen'rous paſſion ſhow,
With inborn greatneſs plead thy rival's claim:
Lead him to happineſs which can't be thine;
Wipe from her eye the pearly drop of grief,
And prove at leaſt that you deſerve her love.—

PHARON.

Yes, then! my better angel, I will go;
Will drive this miſt of paſſion far away;
No longer plunge impetuous into guilt,
But be again the partner of thy virtues.

[*Exit.*

Manet CLEONES.

May Heav'n ſupport thee in the great reſolve.
But, oh! I fear, like to the meteor's blaze,
'Twill for a moment ſhine, and then expire.
When firſt, untutor'd in the wiles of men,
In ſweet ſimplicity, I knew thee, Pharon,
Ne'er was a mind more richly grac'd than thine!
How could example then thus change thy ſoul?
But what cannot example do? at firſt
The ingenuous mind with horror views

The

The frightful form of vice.—But ſoon, alas!
The dire contagion ſpreads.—We dare to do
What we but lately ſhudder'd to behold.
Each finer feeling is by cuſtom drown'd;
We catch the reigning manners of the age,
And loſe abhorrence for the worſt of crimes.

[*Exit.*

End of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

CEALLACHAN *discover'd in Prison, with a single Taper burning.*

[*Comes forward.*]

CEALLACHAN.

WHERE now the regal pomp and proud parade?
Where now my thronging chiefs, eager to show
A real or fictitious zeal? and, oh! where now
The nuptial torch, and Hymen's blissful rites?
The radiant sun ne'er shed his golden beams
Around a happier monarch's brow, when last
His bright effulgence bless'd the world:
But thus the fabric moulders into dust,
Whose base is founded on the ground of life.
Ah! foolish man, who to the future blind,
By Fancy's gay creation fondly paints
Sweet scenes of bliss that never can arrive:
Each passing day the lov'd delusion proves;
Yet ev'ry day brings forth some new deception.

[*Turns, and sees* STIRA *at the bottom of the Stage.*]

Ha! doth some bright phantom mock a wretch?
Or can it be?—It is, it must be she:
For she alone's possess'd of such a form!—

[*Runs to her.*

Oh! thou bright maid, who thus benignly shines,
Amidst

Amidſt ſurrounding gloom; Oh! quickly ſay,
Doth that ſoft boſom beat indeed for me?
Do thoſe ſad tears from mutual paſſion flow,
And is the bloody Sitrick only falſe?

STIRA.

O think not hardly of thy Stira's faith!
No baſe deceit this boſom e'er hath known;
By Sitrick's art I too have been deceiv'd,
No brighter proſpect e'er a maid beguil'd:
To plunge her from tranſporting look'd-for bliſs,
To all the matchleſs horrors of deſpair.

CEALLACHAN.

Oh! thou art truth itſelf,—in every look
I read the rich perfection of thy ſoul.
Oh! let me wipe thoſe courſing tears away;
Let me infold thee in theſe longing arms,
Gaze on thy beauty, preſs thoſe balmy lips,
Till loſt in raptures of ecſtatic bliſs,
I taſte of heav'nly joys before I die.

STIRA.

Yet live, my lord, to love and me—if no more
Of pow'r depriv'd, to Munſter you'd return,
With thee to ſome lone rural ſpot I'll fly,
Sequeſter'd from the world, with thee be bleſs'd,
Not think of royalty reſign'd.—

CEALLACHAN.

—Oh! no:
Tho' my ſoul pants for ſuch a ſtate with thee,
A thouſand reaſons do my bliſs obſtruct,
And place eternal obſtacles between.

STIRA.

STIRA.

What, tho' glory may not on the deed attend;
Yet love its balmieſt influence ſhall ſhed,
Shall make us happieſt of the human race.
No pomp I ſeek, no glittering badge of power,
No ſplendid roof, no high repaſt demand;
So thou art mine, I care not for ſuch toys.
With thee the humbleſt cot will ſtill delight;
The ſimpleſt food, the coarſeſt dreſs will pleaſe:
With thee the pleaſing partner of each toil,
Theſe hands ſhall gladly labour, from the morn
Till in the weſt the evening ſun deſcends;
Then by thy friendly arm upheld, I'll ſeek
The peaceful ſhelter of our ſweet retreat;
There welcome in the night with vows of love,
And bury ev'ry care within thy arms.

CEALLACHAN.

Ah! ceaſe; ſuch unexampled love refrain:
Already doth my reſolution ſhake;
To liſten longer would my fall complete.
Had Fortune plac'd me in an humbler ſphere,
How eagerly I'd ſeek ſome rural ſpot,
Far from the noiſe and buſtle of the world,
By woods emburied, and by rocks begirt:
There would I taſte true happineſs with thee;
With thee, each ecſtacy of love enjoy;
And bleſs the lowly lot whoſe peaceful toil
Ne'er led me from my Stira's charms away!
But now, my honour and my fame's at ſtake;
Nay more, my love; for love like thine muſt ceaſe,
When it no longer can eſteem,—

STIRA.

STIRA.

—Ah, talk not thus—
What is this honour, or this bubble fame,
Whoſe airy praiſe, thus tempts us to forego
All real, for imaginary bliſs?—

CEALLACHAN.

What elſe but theſe could keep mankind in awe?
Virtue and vice in one dark chaos hurl'd,
No bright reward would ſpur the hero on;
No infamy the villain would deter.
But ſay, doth Stira wiſh me to comply?
Would ſhe embrace the king, whoſe ſelfiſh ſoul
Could meanly practice on a people's love?
Could thus aſſaſſinate the public weal!

STIRA.

'Gainſt thee and virtue, I no longer plead.
O never, never quit thy glorious courſe!
—To yield our darling private paſſions up,
When public good the ſacrifice requires;
Is this world's bounds t' o'erleap—aſpires to heav'n,
And treads upon the footſteps of a God.—

CEALLACHAN.

Thou heav'nly maid, for ever could I hear
Thoſe accents ſweet, which flowing from thy tongue,
Appear to be divine. Would but the fair
Thus plead in Honour's cauſe; would beauty thus
Our kind inſtructor prove; degraded vice
Would hang abaſh'd, and ſeek its native gloom:
Benevolence, with pure unſpotted love,
Would then diſpenſe their heav'nly joys around,
And with angelic bliſs inſpire mankind.

Enter

Enter Captain *to* STIRA.

CAPTAIN.

Madam, the royal Sitrick quick demands
Thy preſence.—

STIRA.

—Go, ſay I ſhall attend his will.

[*Exit* Capt.

And ſhall we never, never meet again!
Is all my promis'd bliſs for ever fled!
Is this to be the laſt ſad ſcene of love!

CEALLACHAN.

O ſtop thoſe tears, they pierce me to the ſoul!
Terrors unknown now riſe within my breaſt,
Shake my reſolves, and make a coward of me!
To part with life I nothing deem'd: but, oh!
To part with thee is more than I can bear!

STIRA.

Methinks I now behold thy mangled corſe—
Thy body writhing in the pangs of death!—
O ſave me, ſave me from the direful image!
The dread idea fires my heated brain,
And madneſs will enſue!—

[*She throws herſelf on his boſom.*

CEALLACHAN.

—Oh! my lov'd Stira,
Yield not to ſuch thoughts!---the pitying Heav'ns,
Who now behold our innocence and woes,
May yet, by ſome unlook'd-for means avert
Impending ruin, and our bliſs reſtore.

STIRA.

STIRA.

Vain is the hope---no pitying Heav'ns avert
Thy hapleſs fate: too ſurely wilt thou bleed;
And, oh! diſtracting thought, wilt bleed for me!

Enter CAPTAIN *again.*

CAPTAIN.

Thy royal brother ſends once more, to bid
Thy inſtant preſence.---

STIRA.

---Retire, I'll follow thee.

[*Exit* Capt.

CEALLACHAN, *embraces her.*

And muſt we part? muſt I reſign thee then?
Oh! Stira, for ever could I hold thee thus;
Here claſp thee, till the hand of drooping age
No more obey'd the dictates of the ſoul:
E'en then, my cloſing eyes ſhould look on thee,
My fault'ring tongue pronounce thy darling name,
And the laſt ſinking pulſe ſhould beat with love.

STIRA.

O let me go, whilſt yet 'tis in my pow'r!
My lips deny an utt'rance to my thoughts.
Oh! let theſe tears ſupply the place of words,
And bid to thee, my lord, a ſad farewell.—

[*Goes ſlowly out.*—Ceallachan *gazes after her—then ſpeaks.*]

CEALLACHAN, *Solus.*

Thus doth the wretch whom ſome o'erwhelming wave
Hath ſwept from off the deck, behold the ſhip

Paſs rapid thro' the deep—ſtill as ſhe goes,
His hopes of life decline; no longer ſeen,
Deſpair o'erpow'rs his ſoul; he ſtrives no more,
But yields, without a ſtruggle, to his fate. [*Exit.*

SCENE *changes to the Palace.*

Enter SITRICK *and* PHARON.

SITRICK.

What then, doth Pharon plead in ſuch a cauſe?
Seeks he to looſe a lion from the toils,
Inflam'd by inſult, and with vengeance fir'd?
No, by the manes of my royal ſire,
He yields ſubmiſſion to the Daniſh arms,
Becomes a tributary vaſſal to our ſway,
Or falls a victim to his ſtubborn honour.

PHARON.

O think, my lord, whilſt yet to think is thine;
Nor let ill-grounded fears miſlead thy ſoul.
Gen'rous and noble is the captive king,
Above the paſſions of a vulgar mind:
Give but thy lovely ſiſter to his arms,
Let liberty unpinion'd wait his ſteps,
Not clogg'd with baſe conceſſions; and truſt me, Sitrick,
You'll gain a friend, where you ſuſpect a foe.

SITRICK.

Ha! do I wake? is Stira held ſo cheap,
That Pharon ſlights what he ſo late implor'd?
Doth Sitrick ſtoop to join his blood to thine,

That

That thou ſhould'ſt ſcorn the bounteous gift; ſhould'ſt praiſe
With laviſh tongue the man I hate, and prove
Ungrateful to the hand that rais'd thee?

PHARON.

——My Lord,
Is this ungrateful, when thus thy Pharon pleads
'Gainſt all his fondeſt wiſhes could demand?
When thus for Sitrick's welfare he'd reſign
Far more than life—the woman he adores?
O do not wrong thy ſervant's faithful zeal,
Nor wound a boſom that would bleed for thee!

SITRICK.

Forgive th' impetuous temper of thy Lord,
And know that he no longer doubts thy truth.
—But, lo! the mourning Stira hither comes,
And in the ſettl'd ſadneſs of her brow,
I read the haughty monarch's ſtern reſolve.

STIRA *enters.*

What then! hath female ſoftneſs urg'd in vain
Its fond attachment and the joys of love?
Could he unmov'd behold thoſe ſtreaming eyes,
Nor by compliance chace thy tears away?
Now by the immortal gods! if yet one drop
Of Denmark's royal blood courſe thro' thy veins,
And tell thee of thy birth, thou'lt be reveng'd!
Wilt to a fonder lover give thy hand,
E'en in the preſence of this haughty king;
And greatly ſhow, you've learn't to ſcorn the man
Whoſe pride's ſuperior to his love for thee!

STIRA.

Could he to ſelfiſh pleaſures yield up all
That ſpeaks the monarch, and adorns the man,
He would indeed deſerve my ſcorn. For know,
Tho' Stira feels each weakneſs of her ſex;
Tho' unavailing woe muſt caſt a ſhade
O'er every future hour; and grief unceaſing,
Thro' a ſad exiſtence, wait me to the grave;
By all the powers of Heav'n I ſwear,
I'd rather bear it all, than give my hand
Where forfeit honour was the price that gain'd it!

SITRICK.

No more ſhalt thou abuſe thy brother's patience
With idle nonſenſe and romantic folly.
Entreaties from this moment ceaſe; and now
In me thou ſeeſt a maſter, whoſe pow'r ſupreme
Muſt be confeſs'd——Madam, behold the man
Whom Sitrick deſtines for thy lord——and learn
That my commands henceforth ſhall be obey'd.

PHARON.

I'm loſt again, and virtue is no more. [*Aſide.*

STIRA.

Doth Sitrick know ſo little of my ſoul,
That thus he deals forth threats to ſhake my truth?
Think'ſt thou the maid Ceallachan prefers,
Can ever ſtoop to own another Lord?
No! By that royal blood which fills my veins,
Which lifts my ſex ſuperior to its fears,
If death alone can ſave my plighted faith,
In death I'll ſhow thee what it is to love!

Enter

Enter a DANISH CAPTAIN *to* SITRICK.

CAPTAIN.

My Lord, my Lord, the Iriſh chief is gone!
By wond'rous means he——

SITRICK.

——Ha! Ceallachan eſcap'd!——
Bring forth the treacherous guard——

CAPTAIN.

——My royal Lord,
Duncan alone hath from thy troops eſcap'd:
His garb forſaken, and a bar remov'd
Declare the wondrous means by which the chief
Obtain'd a paſſage to the waves below.
Th' aſtoniſh'd Danes e'en yet their ſenſes doubt,
So daring was the act; and all agree
He periſh'd e'er he reach'd the foaming deep,
Or in the raging billows met his fate.

SITRICK.

'Tis well: I'm calm again. Double the guard
That watches o'er the eaſtern tow'r, and ſee
That future vigilance for this atone.

[*Exit* Captain.

Nay then, ſince bars, ſince waves oppoſe in vain,
My tardy vengeance ſhall no longer ſleep.
Madam, prepare my pleaſure to fulfil:
For know, e'er yet the moon's reflected light
Doth for the wearied ſun illume the heav'ns,
The holy prieſt ſhalt give thee to my friend,

Whilſt

Whilſt Munſter's King beholds the ſacred rites,
And learns to dread that power he now contemns.
Nay, ſpare thy tears; they on a lover fail'd;
And truſt me, Stira, will not now avail.

[*Exit* Sitrick.

PHARON.

Permit me, beauteous maid, to ſoothe thy woes,
And ſhare at leaſt the grief I cannot cure.
If to adore thee more than all thy ſex;
If to have lov'd in ſilence from that hour,
When firſt thoſe heav'nly beauties caught mine eye,
Can merit a return, 'tis Pharon's right.
O let me then thus ſeize thy hand——Thus ſpeak---

STIRA.

Away---thou baſe inſulter go,---nor prove,
That every virtue hath forſook thy breaſt!
My ſorrows would be private, Sir——not ſeen
By ſuch as thou art!——

PHARON.

——O kill not with thy ſcorn,
The man who loves thee; to diſtraction loves----
But give thy pity, if thou giv'ſt no more.

STIRA.

O Heav'ns! doſt thou preſume to talk of love?
Love is the produce of a generous ſoil,
Shoots forth luxuriant in the noble mind,
Is nurs'd by virtue, and by honour fed.
It ſprings not in the tainted heart,
Nor dwells in ſouls like thine.——

PHA-

PHARON.

——Oh! wrong me not.
Could'ſt thou behold the feelings of this heart,
No longer would theſe keen reproaches flow.

STIRA.

Thy *virtues* are indeed to me unknown.
Unleſs the blood of innocence betray'd,
Unleſs ſubſervience to a tyrant's will,
Be rank'd as ſuch—but hear me e'er I go:
Not all the power of him thou calleſt lord,
Shall ever force me to be thine---for know,
That death is welcome, when compar'd to thee.

[*Exit.*

Manet PHARON.

Is death then welcome, when compar'd with me?
No, no; when paſſion ceaſes, other thoughts
Will fill thy breaſt, and life again be priz'd.
Tho' now the object of thy hate, the hand of time
Will change thy ſoul, and make me dear to thee.---
With kind attention, and unceaſing love
I'll melt thy ſtubborn heart---and make thee own
That Pharon merits——

CLEONES *enters.*

——Ha! Cleones here!—
I dare not meet his eye. Let me withdraw,
Nor ſeem to have perceiv'd that he approach'd.

[*Exit.*

CLEONES *Solus.*

My Lord—Cleones would addreſs thine ear—
He ſhuns me then, and thus declares his vow
Forgotten,

Forgotten, and his purpoſe chang'd—In vain
I've ſought to call extinguiſh'd virtue forth;
In vain have ſought to ſave this godlike King.—
Oh, what a ſtate is mine? my grateful ſoul
Bound to Ceallachan by ties moſt ſtrong,
Now ſees the hour of fate draw near, without
A ray of hope.—Oh, thou Almighty Power,
Supreme of Heav'n! an humble ſuppliant hear—
Grant me the means this hero to preſerve;
Give me to pay the mighty debt I owe him,
And in his ſtead let me to vengeance bleed.

[*Exit.*

End of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE, *Palace of* Dublin.

STIRA, BEDA.

STIRA.

THE hour of fate draws near—the chiefs are met,
The holy prieſt prepares the ſolemn rites,
Waits but a nod th' Almighty to blaſpheme,
And give a ſanction to the worſt of crimes.
O ſay, then, Beda, is thy friend forgot?

BEDA.

O no, my Stira, I have been too true,
Nor broke a promiſe I ſo raſhly made.
[*Shows a Phial.*
Behold the dreadful gift that friendſhip brings.

STIRA, *ſnatches the Phial.*

Thus let me ſeize the precious draught, and bleſs
The bounteous hand from whence it came.

ATTENDANT *enters to* STIRA.

ATTENDANT.

Thy royal brother with impatience waits
Till you appear—for you alone delay
Th' expected rites, and univerſal joy.

STIRA.

Go tell thy maſter, Stira comes—and comes
Prepar'd for theſe expected rites.—Away—

[*Exit* Attendant.

Yes, Sitrick, this ſhall free me from thy power;
This ſhall preſerve from violation's hand,
And ſhow the wondering world how Stira lov'd.—

[*Drinks.*

'Tis done—No nuptial torch ſhall now diſplay,
The wretched victim of a brother's will.
But in its ſtead, the funeral taper ſhall
Diffuſe its ſickly beams around my corſe,
And add freſh horror to the diſmal ſcene.
O what a change is this! But come, my friend,
We will obey the ſummons of thy Lord—

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to a Room of State, diſcovering* Sitrick, Pharon, Prieſt, Danes, *&c.* Cleones *thoughtful, and ſeparate from the reſt.*

SITRICK, *to an Attendant.*

Once more require the princeſs to attend.
Go ſay that Sitrick and that Pharon waits;
And ſee that prompt compliance doth enſue.

[*Exit* Attendant.

[*To* CLEONES.]

And thou, Cleones, bring the captive king.
Firſt ſhall this haughty monarch own our ſway,

Then

Then ſhall he—

[*A great noiſe is heard.*

—Ha! what ſtrange alarm thus ſtrikes our ear—
Thus rends the vaulted roof with martial ſounds,
Of diſtant war?—

Enter CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

———To arms! to arms! my Lord,
Nor loſe a moment—Already are our walls
Aſcended by the foe—With dreadful fury
On they ruſh, and every tongue cries Vengeance—
Each his fellow urges on, and ſhouts
"Our King we'll free, his horrid wrongs revenge,
"Or periſh all."———

SITRICK.

—Ha! the troops of Munſter here!
This inſtant ſhall their monarch die:—take this—

[*Gives a Signet to* Cleones.

Bury thy poniard in his heart, and ſay,
'Twas Sitrick ſent thee:—away!—

[*Exit* Cleones.

—Now to the fight
We'll lead our valiant Danes; with fury meet,
And drive theſe raſh invaders from our walls.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to the Priſon.*

CEALLACHAN *diſcover'd ſleeping on the Ground—*
CLEONES *enters and gazes on the* King.

CLEONES.

Happy the man whoſe uncorrupted ſoul
No guilty deed diſturbs :—calm and ſerene,
Amidſt impending ills, he lives in peace—
Stretch'd on the earth is bleſs'd with gentle ſlumbers,
Which ſplendid roofs, and beds of ſofteſt down
Oft court in vain.—But, lo! the prince awakes.—

CEALLACHAN, *(riſing).*

Speak—what ſecret purpoſe brings thee to theſe walls?

CLEONES, *ſhewing Signet and Poniard.*

See this, and this, brave prince, and gueſs the reſt.

CEALLACHAN.

I gueſs it all, and am prepar'd to die.—
Thou ſeem'ſt diſturb'd; humanity calls forth
Thy pity for my fate, and ſtops thy arm!—
Fear not to ſtrike the blow—'tis Sitrick's act;
And all the guilt belongs to him.—

CLEONES.

—View me:
This face examine well—recollect'ſt thou ought
That tells thee we have met before?—

CEALLACHAN.

—Thou art
To me unknown;—nor can I recollect,
That e'er I ſaw thee till this hour.—

CLEONES.

CLEONES.

—Then, thus
I execute a tyrant's fell command.

[*Throws away the Dagger, and unbinds him.*

Haſt thou forgot that day, when ſunk to earth
I begg'd for life, nor did in vain implore?—
Thy ſword uplifted, ready to deſcend,
Fell harmleſs to the ground;—Thy boon be thine,
Thou cried'ſt; if e'er a foe beneath thy arm
Shall ſink, ſpare thou his life, and I'm repaid.—
Oft have I wiſh'd ſome bleſs'd occaſion ſince,
This debt to pay, and thus 'tis now diſcharg'd.
Thy troops now ſtorm the ſouthern ſide;—take this.—

[*Gives* Ceallachan *a ſword.*

Theſe walls no longer thee detain.—For me,
I'll haſte to where the thickeſt fight prevails;
There in my country's cauſe provoke my fate!
This act forbids me to ſurvive.—

[*Exit* Cleones.

Manet CEALLACHAN.

—He's gone!
O may ſome guardian power his purpoſe thwart,
And ſave him from himſelf!—Is't poſſible!
My troops already here!—How can it be!—
But now's no time for thought—This way leads forth.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE *changes to* SITRICK'S *Palace.*

Enter DUNCAN, IRISH OFFICERS, Soldiers, *&c.*

DUNCAN.

No tidings of our monarch yet?—Thoſe gates
Thrown wide, which late the King confin'd, declare
Some dreadful deed. O! ſhould he be no more,
What joy can vict'ry yield, or conqueſt give?
Let's haſte and learn his fate, whate'er it be:—
But, hark! ſome one with haſty ſtep draws near:—

CEALLACHAN *enters.*

'Tis he!—he lives!—and all my fears are o'er.—

CEALLACHAN.

Come to my arms, my lov'd, my gallant friend:
Words are too poor to ſpeak thy prince's thanks.—
And ye my brave, my faithful warriors all
Accept th' o'erflowings of thy monarch's heart;
Whoſe grateful ſoul ſhall well repay thy love,
But never can forget it.—

ALL.

—For ſuch a king,
Who would not fight? who would not die?—

CEALLACHAN.

—Once more
I thank ye all:—now Duncan let me know,
By what unlook'd-for means I ſee thee here!—

DUNCAN.

DUNCAN.

Then briefly thus :—Beneath night's friendly ſhade
I gain'd the waves that waſh'd my priſon's baſe,
And reach'd the ſhore without theſe hoſtile gates.
Not many hours had I purſu'd my way,
When to the right, amidſt the trees I ſpy'd
The glare of arms ;—the moon's full orb diſplay'd
The forms of men, and the quick ear beſpoke
Approaching ſteps :—alarm'd, I chang'd my courſe,
And to the left prepar'd to fly :—juſt then,
A party ruſhing forth oppos'd my way :
But, what my glad ſurprize ! when I beheld
Theſe dear companions of my earlieſt arms :
My father led them on : from him I learn'd,
Some few had ſcap'd unnotic'd from the fight,
Had reach'd his camp, and told the treach'rous deed :
Enrag'd he march'd th' impatient troops,
And thus unlook'd-for are we here.—

CEALLACHAN.

— But ſay,
How was the victory gain'd ?—I burn to know
The glorious fight ;—Haſte, let me hear it all.—

DUNCAN.

Fir'd by my tale, we quickly reach'd theſe walls,
And led our furious troops againſt the foe :
The Danes ſurpris'd, at firſt made no defence ;
We gain'd the wall, and beat their feeble guard :
But ſoon the day was chang'd ; their ſwarming troops
Clos'd up each gap of death, and ſeem'd t' increaſe,
Not leſſen by our ſlaught'ring ſwords :—in vain
Our little band oppos'd their dauntleſs breaſts,

To

To all the ſhock of war: Their numerous foes
With unremitting fury drove them on,
To where a dreadful precipice o'erhangs
The briny wave; deſpair fill'd ev'ry heart,
And certain death appear'd on ev'ry hand:
When, lo! the valiant Fingal, ever firſt
Bright glory's path to tread, on Sitrick ruſh'd,
And graſp'd the tyrant in his dreadful arms!
Vengeance, he cry'd! and with a furious ſpring,
From off the rock he leap'd! another chief
Th' aſtoniſh'd Pharon ſeiz'd with equal rage,
And copied Fingal's god-like deed!—The Danes
A moment ſtood, and fearful gaz'd below.
Such deſperate acts their fortitude ſubdu'd;
Such deſperate acts our troops inſpir'd;—They fled,
And conqueſt crown'd our arms.—

CEALLACHAN.

—O glorious men!
Such deaths as yours make even conqueſt dear.
But ſuch men do not die!—their deeds immortal,
Borne on the wings of time, for ever live;
For ever claim the tribute of applauſe!
Eternal honours wait their ſacred ſhades,
And from their aſhes future heroes ſpring!

DUNCAN.

My royal liege, among the captive Danes
One chief was ta'en, who ſeem'd to court his fate;—
Ne'er did theſe eyes behold a braver warrior.—

CEALLACHAN.

Ha! conduct him hither.

[*Exit* Duncan.

Mean

—Mean time, my friends,
Let no rude noiſe diſturb this ſacred roof.
Far be the din of arms remov'd from hence;
Nor let one hoſtile deed proclaim us victors;
For here my Stira dwells. I'll ſeek her ſtraight,
And ſoothe her troubled ſpirits into reſt.

[*Exit.*

[CEALLACHAN *goes out on one ſide, Soldiers on the other.*]

SCENE *opens, diſcovering* STIRA *ſtretch'd on a Couch, as if dead; Attendants weeping round her.*

Enter CEALLACHAN.

What mean theſe ſounds of woe?—Celeſtial pow'rs!
Do I behold my Stira thus!—

[*Kneels by her.*

—Oh! lovely maid,
Here will I gaze, here ſtay while life remains!
O look on me as thou wert wont, and glance
That ſoft delicious fondneſs to my ſoul:
O let thoſe balmy lips once more pour forth
Harmonious numbers to my raviſh'd ears.
Alas! thoſe eyes have loſt their melting ſweets;
Thoſe lips no more their heav'nly ſounds diſpenſe;—
Death revels over every charm!—
Hark!—ſhe calls!—ſhe chides my loitering hand!—

[*He ſtarts up, and draws his ſword.*

I come! I come! and thus—

[BEDA *runs in, and ſeizes his Arm.*

BEDA.

—This raſhneſs ceaſe;
And learn from me, that Stira yet ſurvives:
By me deceiv'd, no poiſon hath ſhe ta'en,
But in its ſtead a draught of wond'rous pow'r,
Which for a time each ſenſe doth lull to reſt,
As if th' infranchis'd ſoul had bid adieu
To its frail dwelling.—

CEALLACHAN.

—Do not trifle with deſpair;
But as you hope for happineſs to come,
Tell me if this ſtrange tale doth bear the ſtamp
Of holy truth!—

BEDA, *pulls out a Phial.*

—This ſhall anſwer all thy doubts:—
[*Applies it to* STIRA.
Behold! the lily yields its ſickly hue,
And the rich ſtreams of life renew their courſe.—

CEALLACHAN.

She breathes!—her eye reſumes its wonted luſtre,
And the pale cheek regains its blooming honours.—
[*Turns to* BEDA.
Yes! my guardian angel, ſhe doth ſurvive!
Yet ſhall my charmer live and make me bleſs'd.

STIRA *raiſes herſelf, and looks wildly round.*

Surrounding ſpirits, ſay! what manſion this,
Where Stira's doom'd to dwell!—methinks theſe walls
Are not unknown!—My lov'd attendants too!
Sure that is Beda! and, oh! thou lov'd ſhade,
[*To* Ceallachan.

Is Heav'n indeed thus kind, to give me thee?—

CEALLACHAN.

My lovely fair, recall thy wand'ring ſpirits;
Thou haſt not yet thy debt to nature paid:
No deadly poiſon tears my Stira hence;
But years of bliſs ſhall crown thy virtues here!

BEDA.

Forgive a fraud by friendſhip prompted, and live
A happineſs to taſte, unknown to me.
I'll bid the world adieu; and now devote
The remnant of my days to holy deeds.
Farewell.—Oppoſe me not—nor vainly ſeek
To change the ſettl'd purpoſe of my ſoul.

[*Exit* Beda.

STIRA.

Since thus reſolv'd, O may that peace be thine
Which holy deeds deſerve!—And now my Lord,
O tell me, where is Sitrick?—Whatever crimes
His ſoul debaſe, he is my brother.—

CEALLACHAN.

—Alas!
He lives no more.—

STIRA.

—And by thy arm he fell?

CEALLACHAN.

O no! my love;—this hand could ne'er have ſhed
Thy brother's blood:—Before I join'd my troops,
Th' unhappy Dane from Fingal met his fate.

Nay, weep not thus; but ſay, thou beauteous maid,
When may I hope—

STIRA.

—Oh! talk not now of love!—
Already doſt thou know, how dear thou art.
When Stira ought to give her hand—on you,
And you alone, ſhe will beſtow it.—

CEALLACHAN.

—Enough.
Forgive a lover's ardour; and know, my fair,
Theſe nicer feelings do the more endear thee.—

DUNCAN *enters, with* CLEONES *in Chains.*

DUNCAN.

Behold, my liege, the Dane, whoſe furious arm—

CEALLACHAN *runs to* CLEONES.

And do I ſee my kind deliverer thus!—
[*Turns to Soldiers.*
Unlooſe theſe chains—to him ye owe your king!
[*They take his chains off.*
Say, gen'rous Dane, what can a monarch give,
That worth like yours, wilt honour with acceptance?

CLEONES.

Moſt noble king, one only boon I aſk—
Let not the Danes to juſt reſentment fall:
Forget thoſe wrongs, which but diſgrac'd thy foes;
And having conquer'd them, thyſelf ſubdue.

CEAL-

CEALLACHAN.

Such worth as thine for all thoſe wrongsatone.—
No power I claim o'er Denmark's ſons, ſave that
Of making thee their Lord.—

CLEONES.

—With grateful thanks,
Permit me to decline this purpos'd rank;—
It ſuits not with the man—

CEALLACHAN.

—Urge not too far
This niceneſs of thy ſoul: none can demand
A fuller proof of moſt exalted worth:
Thou'rt form'd to rule; nor will I be denied.
[*Turns to* DUNCAN.
Go looſe the chains of ev'ry captive Dane;
Baniſh their fears, and tell them they are free:
Then ſee, my Duncan, that our valiant troops
Elated with ſucceſs, oppreſs them not;
Nor baſely give an inſult to the fall'n.

(*Addreſſes the Audience.*)

When in the field we meet oppoſing foes;
When ſteel to ſteel is clos'd in deadly ſtrife,
Let Rage inſpire, and Fury ſtalk at large:
But when the fortune of the day is caſt;
When in the vanquiſh'd we no longer meet
Contending arms—let Mercy walk abroad,
The conquer'd ſoothe, and mitigate their pain;
The dying comfort, and the wounded heal.
Succeſs indeed our admiration draws;
But 'tis Humanity deſerves applauſe.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

By the AUTHOR.

Spoken in the Character of STIRA.

NAY, ſtop that riſing grin—I come not here,
To raiſe a laugh, or wound the modeſt ear.
No wedding-jeſt; nay, not one double phraſe,
Shall make the timid bluſh, or wanton pleaſe.

Tho' fix'd by cuſtom, that ſome comic ſtrain
Should ſoothe your woes, and mitigate your pain;
Our bard preſumes to wear a ſolemn face;
To quit the beaten path of ſly grimace;
Gives the ſhrill notes of laughter to the wind,
And to reflection leaves the feeling mind.

Ye Fair, attend! like me ſtill faithful prove,
Yet firſt, like me, with caution fix your love.
Let no ſoft nonſenſe ſteal upon the heart;
Be not the captives of each coxcomb's art:
But when with honour manly ſenſe unites,
And the fond lover all your love invites;
With freedom own—nay, glory in the flame,
And think unſhaken truth your nobleſt fame.

Ye gen'rous Youths, this godlike hero view,
His virtues copy, to his worth prove true.
When war's dread clangor gives the loud alarm,
Let fury nerve each daring warrior's arm:

But,

But, in these hours of soft endearing peace,
Let horrid rage and civil discord cease:
No more unsheath the ornamental sword,
Nor combat for a rash unguarded word.

Somewhat there was the Poet bade me say,
To deprecate your wrath, and save his play.
Oh—'twas to tell you 'tis his first offence—
But be not trick'd by any such pretence;
For, tho' I dare not speak—'twixt you and I,
He ne'er again will at your mercy lie.

THE END.